Understanding the Negative Impacts of Rigid Instituional Framework on Community Development Projects: A Case From Bangladesh

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A B S T R A C T

Most The goal of this article is to analyse the participatory process of development projects. Drawing upon my professional experience in a project called Pre-Poor Slum Intergration Project (PPSIP) which was based in Comilla, Bangladesh - I argue that development projects dominated by rigid power structures inside and in-between institutions inhibits community participation that reflects the actual need of the beneficiary group; and as happened in this case, produce results that do not serve the people in real need but rather only serve the purpose of the institutions that manage the project, more so the institutions having higher degrees of power. In this article I try to combine insights gained from our field experience and literature study on post-politics and power in planning in order to sketch out the stakeholder institutions' interest, capacity and enrolment in order to understand how socio-relational dynamics as opposed to technical procedures shaped the project. In this project participation from the community was ritualistic-serving only a face-value, the operational team on the field were devoid of power to take important decisions or challenge the institutional framework that they were part of, and at the same time institutions with higher degrees of decision making power were not sufficiently involved with the realities of the field. I conclude that in order to make participatory process really work, involved institutions should not limit their efforts in repetitive consensus building exercises based on pre-conceived ideas and traditional methods of community development.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a densely populated country. Rapid urbanization has put significant strain on cities and towns of Bangladesh. According to a 2009 study, around five million housing units are needed in Bangladesh to address housing shortage, and majority of population without adequate housing are from the low income group (NHA, 2014). Housing is predominantly

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developed by private market in Bangladeshi cities and the market is driven by profit. A large portion of the population cannot avail good quality housing available in the market; that is when the illegal settlements or slums come in the picture.

There are around 50,000 illegal and low income settlements in Bangladesh's 29 largest municipalities (NHA, 2014). Poor housing materials, high rent, limited access to public services, densely crowded and unsanitary living conditions, lack of tenure security etc. are some characteristic problems of these settlements. The settlements lack healthy living environment that is necessary for well-being of adults and children. By now it is well established that slum eviction is a violation of basic human rights and it involves high social and economic costs. The government is becoming increasingly aware that slum-development/ integration efforts can be the appropriate approach.

The government has attempted to perform integrated approaches to slum development with the help of international development organizations such as UNDP, UK Aid etc. Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction, in short, UPPR is such a project which runs in 21 cities of Bangladesh. In seven years until 2015, UPPR has successfully mobilized and empowered slum communities (especially the women) to develop their own savings, infrastructure etc. With UPPR, some communities have now started to also develop housing (UPPR, 2011). PPSIP (Pro-Poor Slum Integration Project) started with an intention to expand UPPR's efforts with housing development.

Participatory design/planning is a central element in many contemporary slum integration initiatives as in the case of PPSIP. The main objective of such participatory projects is to assist disadvantaged individuals and groups in changing their own living condition; and to do this by valorizing local knowledge and resources. Participatory design/planning projects bring people from different social-educational-financial backgrounds around the table in negotiating terms. Often the interests and enrolment are too difficult to be determined in preliminary phases. Eventually even the most community-centered/ democratic project might derail from its goals due to obdurate power hierarchy among stakeholders. Through this research I try to understand and decode related stakeholders' and project participants' interest, capacity and enrolment in different projects and explain whether or how structures and

dynamics of power relations in these projects serves the beneficiary group.

1.1. Research methods
This is a qualitative research. The main insights of the study is drawn from my professional experiences in the project PPSIP and my involvement in other activities with the architects who were involved in this project. A vital part of empirical understanding comes from active participation in facilitating and participating in workshops, community visits, interviewing locals, architects and NGO representatives etc. Through extensive report writing and journal keeping, I have made observations on how participatory processes are carried out, how the communities and community leaders respond to programs, or how professionals respond to communities' concerns and so on. Active involvement in other slum development projects as community architect have also allowed me to sketch out the problems in a broader scale and also understand ethical positions and interests of different actors in similar projects. A number of research questions which have guided this research:

1.How accurately do the project understand the beneficiary community's social reality, needs and resources? How far do the processes and mechanisms of the project resonate with community's needs and aspiration?

2.How is power exercised by different actors in the process

2. Literature review
2.1. Strategic Spatial Planning
The interpretation of planning systems with an actor-structure perspective by Van den Broeck and Servillo in their article, *The Social Construction of Planning Systems: A Strategic-Relational Institutionalist Approach* provides with an understanding of dialectic interplay of agency and institutions shaping the specificities of planning systems, and thus influencing external changes (Van Den Broeck & Servillo, 2012). According to the authors, along with its technical role of economic and social development, changed courses of spatial planning also focus on democratic decision-making process, empower weaker groups; changes in actors and social groups and their positions and practices also bring complex changes in relevant institutions and agency. These dynamics can be interpreted as the effect of non-dominant groups challenging the dominant group in planning system. They argue

that dialectic among hegemonic and counter-hegemonic groups have transformative power in planning system, because counter-hegemonic groups are able to bring changes in institutional frames through action.

Albrechts in his writings about Strategic Spatial Planning has insisted a shift in planning style that is based on designing "shared futures and the development and promotion of common assets." The essence of SSP is also to find alternative approaches to "instrumental rationality". This alternative way refers to value rationality, a method of making dialogues where value based images, which are embedded in specific contexts, are generated collectively, validated by belief, practice and experience. This method is a reaction to the trend of making "future that extrapolated the past, and maintains the status quo". This approach includes reaching the 'other' part of the population, who are victim of prejudice and exclusion; and giving them the power to create their own image, and to take into account the "unequal balances of power" (Albrechts, 2004).

2.2. Power in planning

In Albrechts' study of power in planning, he argues that planning is essentially shaped by complicated power relations and because the dominant interests are not necessarily always is in line with the "force of better argument"; the process of negotiations among plan-making actors, decision-making actors and implementation actors usually results in a consensus which neutralizes important/ significant opinions.

An important reflection is also built with Albrechts' view on citizen's ambivalence on power system; according to him, the citizens are not convinced of the power of informal structures and frameworks in shaping the flow of events in planning field. He establishes that, although dominant power relations are not easy to change, empowerment has the potential to support collective efforts to change such relations. Albrechts argues that spatial planning, with the help of a number of mediating instruments and processes can take steps forward to achieve participative democracy. (Albrecths, 2013).

2.3. Post-Politics

Our experience in PPSIP has inspired us to think about participatory planning in a critical way. Sometime participatory planning becomes a buzzword, something which certifies a project as socially sustainable. Reading on post politics

has served us with understanding of why only consensus building is not enough in establishing rights and justice. In his presentation on post-politics, Metzger explains how post-politics refers to a number of aspects of contemporary planning practices that are deficient in many perspectives; these practices have an uncritical attitude towards partnership governance and participatory consensus building. Although the process of participation is supposed to bring clarity of opinion from different actor groups; participatory planning might instead result in nightmarishly complex governance arrangements, making it difficult to clearly understand, analyze and reproduce the processes with success. Because many different actors are involved and their interest, stake and enrolment is not always clearly sketched out, it becomes difficult to assign authority to actions. The literature on post-politics also highlights how participatory planning might sometimes be used as a mean to suppress dissent on difficult issues; this happens because all actors sitting around a table are not given equal right of say what they have in mind. Thus in reality, participatory process only serve a part of the purpose, not the whole of it- it might bring people who were deprived of right of opinion in the scene, but the agenda of discussion might not allow everyone to properly voice their concern, and at the end of the day, it's the most powerful actor whose interest will be served. This way consensus building only works as a way of social control by reducing the possibility for other actors to oppose the most powerful actor.

An important aspect of the post-political approach is the recognition of this conflict of interest and accepting that the political difference should not be suppressed, rather expressed on public platform, so that they are "explored and articulated in ways that can contribute to "taming" potentially violent antagonism into democratically productive agonism" (Metzger, 2016). Agonism allows for "fundamentally opposed political ideals and interests to play out against each other in democratically acceptable forms based on – if not sympathy or understanding – at least a mutual recognition of legitimacy and respect for difference" (Metzger, 2016).

Irina Velicu and Maria Kaika's paper animates the story of years long anti-mining struggles in Rosia Montana, Romania with a theoretical basis adopted from Jacques Rancière's writings on postpolitics. Rancière argues about

consensual politics that, "within an established framework, disagreement can only be articulated around opinions and values or around best solutions for a contested situation. The situation itself, the framework itself within which this dialogue operates (e.g. Continuous development, neoliberalism, etc.) is not (supposed to be) contested" (Velicu & Kaika, 2014, p.3). So, to make changes that matter, it is important that the framework within which a project operates should remain flexible to some extent.

3. Background of Pro-Poor Slum Integration Project
3.1. Pro-Poor Slum Integration Project
Pro-Poor Slum Integration Project or PPSIP started in 2014 and aims to complete implementation in 2021. The analysis of the case will firstly illustrate the thematic guideline of the project which is extracted from multiple reports (NHA, 2014) and then identify the complexities of implementation in the first several months of the pilot phase of the project.

The objective of Pro-Poor Slum Integration Project is to improve shelter and living conditions in selected low income and informal settlements in a number of municipalities in Bangladesh. The project also aims to develop infrastructure, e.g. road, drainage etc. in these neighborhoods. An additional focus of this project is to introduce collaborative learning in poverty stricken urban areas with the means of Community Support Centers. The beneficiary communities and municipalities are selected through strategic steps and the project aims to

scale up the development endeavours to additional municipalities in the future through demonstration.

3.1.1. Integration of policies
The project reflects Bangladesh's Seventh Five Year Plan. According to this, "specific priorities of housing development are: (i) enabling land markets to work efficiently; (ii) improving the mechanism for financing housing and (iii) encouraging participation of the private sector, community based organizations, and non-government organizations to participate in service provision, particularly through policies to support inclusion." (Seventh Five Year Plan (FY16-20) , n.d.) The National Housing Policy (1993/2004) recognizes the rights of the inhabitants in slums and informal settlements. This further focuses on the development of alternative housing supply programs to address the needs of the economically marginalized group.

3.1.2. Community driven approach
This project is designed with a community-driven and people centered approach. It adopts the Asian Coalition for Community Action- ACCA approach practiced in different countries of South-east Asia. The approach is based on building funding capability within the community and empowering community people to improve their own living conditions. ACCA includes a people centered approach to slum upgrading, including tenure and housing rights. The first step is community mobilization and organization- gradually building social cohesion through collective action
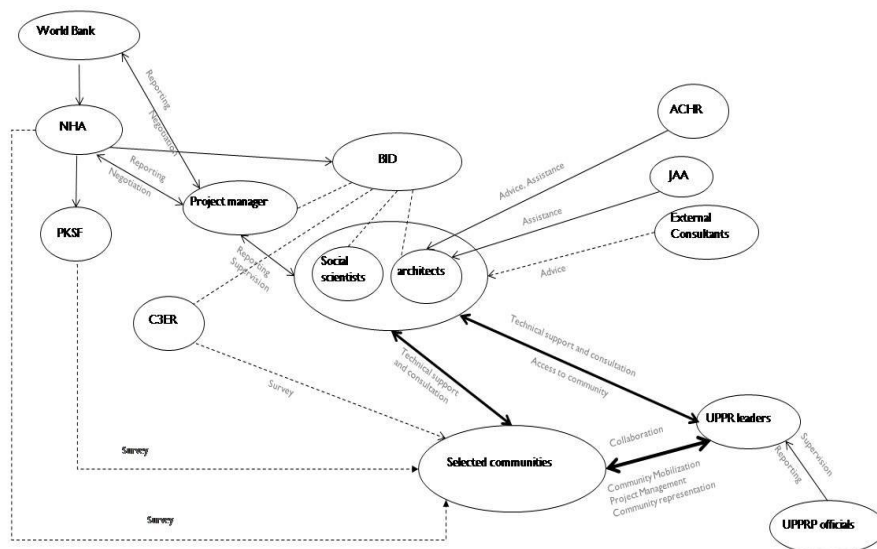
Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Actor relationship and enrolment in PPSIP.

ACCA then provides loans for larger housing projects and supports communities with architectural and planning assistance for site layout and design. This big and small funds goes to a city as a set of funds in order to make city-wide development. In this mechanism, in order to sustain the process, communities are mobilized to be connected by networks so they can take collaborative action towards common habitat development goals. The solution comes through forming larger- scale revolving funds; all involved communities take part in it – these funds are called community development funds (CDFs) and they may operate at different levels: the district level, city level, provincially or even nationally.

ACCA funds pass through a city level CDF (Community Development Fund) rather than going directly to the community. This CDFs can also be supplemented by a welfare fund and an insurance fund. CDF also serve as the institutionalization of community processes while it incorporates multiple different stakeholders, such as community members, academics, NGOs, and government officials. ACCA supports communities in acquiring formal land title through negotiated purchases, or securing land grants or long term leases through communication with land authorities. ACCA encourages the communities to develop their savings, so they can avail other sources of finance (e.g. Bank loans). Successful communities are linked with other communities on the city level which provides them the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, links city wide savings efforts and through this, communities feel empowered and connected. (ARCHER, 2012)

3.1.3. Partnership with UPPR

The project is designed to work with cohesive community groups of UPPR, who already has a history of savings, and are experienced in planning and developing small scale infrastructure projects, e.g. neighbourhood road, toilets etc. Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPR) started in 2000 with organization and mobilization of the community, savings and livelihoods programs, and simple infrastructure development through community contracting with awards of small grants. Until now, in 21 different municipalities of the country, UPPR communities manage 30,000 primary groups organized under 2,588 community development committees. With community collaboration, they build community action plans to implement livelihood programs and basic infrastructure

development. Up to date, UPPR has over 5 million USD savings rotating among 26,000 community based savings and credit groups. UPPR started in many municipality an effort to control viability of community based lending products for housing, this is called Community Housing Development Funds (CHDF). The PPSIP project aims to broaden these operations with the means of housing and further infrastructure development.

3.1.4. Institutional plurality

The national-scale project draws on expertise and capacities from different institutions. The project fund (a total of USD 50 Million) is lent to Bangladesh Bank by International Development Association (IDA). In this project, the housing finance for the urban poor comes through community based lending models. That requires development of a number of tailored funding products (e.g., personal, joint liability, group guarantee etc.) with which households will get access to credits as qualified borrowers, the financial models are to be developed by Palli Karma Sayahak Foundation (PKSF). National Housing Authority (NHA) is responsible for employing technical consultants for environmental and social assessment and implementation of the project. For the pilot phase of the project, NHA employed a number of institutions affiliated with BRAC University- C3ER (Climate Change and Environmental Research) , a team of architects and a team of social scientists from BID (Brac Institute of Development).

3.2. Selection of communities

The pilot phase started with an aim to test feasibility of the project. This required selecting communities which will help the project to succeed in the pilot phase, so that the efforts can later be more or less replicated for the next communities and next towns.

Through many stages of shortlisting five towns were selected- Sirajgonj, Narayangonj, Comilla, Barisal and Dinajpur. The consultant teams visited the five towns to rank them in an order of 'readiness' of each town, so that they know from in which town the pilot phase should start. The consultant team shared the prospects of the project with local authorities (District comissioner, mayor etc.); ranked prospective communities through meetings with community leaders and visited communities. From this, the consultant team prepared a list of strengths and threats for each town. Both in the cities of Comilla and Sirajgonj, there is good cooperation within communities and among

communities and local government. However, in Comilla a new City Corporation masterplan was in the process and starting the PPSIP project in Comilla could mean incorporation of slum development initiative in the masterplan, and that could facilitate in creating a good example of urban planning for other cities with slum problems.

The initial activities which led to selection of the first five communities were meeting with UPPRP cluster leaders, local NGOs and ward councillors. Through meeting these local representatives, 71 communities were shortlisted. After this shortlisting, the selection criteria were revised in order to find communities which could increase the likelihood of success in the pilot phase, these criteria were, in order of importance: availability of land, performance of savings and credit scheme and possibility of demonstration of various housing options (defined by geographical quality, morphological setting of household etc.).

With the revised criteria, 11 high ranked communities were chosen from this list and categorized on the basis of some characteristics or issues- pond-side communities, lake-side communities, embankment-side communities and socially-disadvantaged communities. This categorization was made with an attempt of forming networks of communities, so that as the project progresses, communities can easily find solutions to their problems with the help of their network.

Eventually, through further revisions of indicators, five communities were chosen for the pilot phase. These communities are: Molobhipara Baburchibari, Shongraish, Hatipukurpar, Shubhopur Gangpar and Uttor Bhatpara.

Though the inclinations of different groups are not explicit, it can be imagined that varying interests in different stakeholders led to a time consuming trial and error process of selection. Regardless of what consultant teams, city representatives and community representatives suggested, a major deciding factor that was set by the design of the program was beneficiary communities' ability to repay loan and their access to legal land. How the deciding power of certain stakeholders played role in the selection process is further elaborated in the next section.

3.3. Reflections on the community selection process

Legal access to land and capacity to repay loan were two major criteria in the community selection process. However, in the communities of Comilla and Sirajgonj, it is rarely the case that a family who has legal and private ownership and are well-off enough to repay the loan easily- are in dire need to build a new house. Comparing to the ultra-poor slum communities, these families have good houses which only need improvements or repairing. According to Islam, the households in communities of Sirajgonj privately owned their lots. The income of the majority of these household is about 30,000 BDT while the target group decided in the project was of families with monthly income of BDT 7000-15000. Those families only needed improvements, such as a good kitchen or a pucca (permanent) roof. (Islam, 2016)

The infrastructural improvement objectives included: 1. Developing access with improved roads 2. Ensuring electricity supply 3. Ensuring gas supply 4. Developing proper waste management 4. Developing drainage for waste-water 5. Ensuring water supply. The first two communities (Shongraish and Moulobhipara) to work with already had basic provision of all these infrastructure, except good drainage and waste disposal system. According to the project design only communities who take part in the housing loan program will receive free of cost infrastructural improvement support. So eventually, the project was practically functioning like a bank housing loan program addressed to lower-middle/middle income families, instead of a slum improvement project. The consultants on field were increasingly uncomfortable with this pattern, but nevertheless, they would continue with the project if the community agreed to the financial scheme that was presented.

A number of communities without land security were highly ranked in the selection process because of cohesion in the community, willingness etc. In spite of being the least developed in terms of infrastructure, housing, land security; those communities were not chosen. It was decided that in the pilot phase the project will work with only communities with legal access to land because the time period for pilot phase (2 years) was too short for any kind of acquisition of land or mitigation addressing land conflict. Another major selection criterion was presence of community cohesiveness and willingness to take part in the project. The communities were always

approached through the UPPR leaders and mostly their cooperation and involvement was taken as indicative of the 'readiness' of community. Naturally, UPPR leaders' interest were very much associated with the programs and achievements of UPPR. Through UPPR programs, they have built saving activities and performed infrastructural projects (communal toilets, communal water taps, improves roads etc.). These processes have gradually improved the communities' socio-physical environments, and equally importantly, empowered the community women by capacitating them with leadership roles and so on. These leaders who worked for the communities for many years seemed to be feeling out of place with the new project when the programs of PPSIP were not in line of UPPR projects.

Although the selection involved local people, eventually it was top-down process. Producing some visible result (as housing) in the pilot phase would be necessary to produce a demonstration effect for the project, and hence the criteria were designed in a way to achieve that goal; but some criterion had a strong focus on the interest of the Bank rather than the communities. In other words, the "community-driven" project could not eventually motivate any community to continue with the project.

3.4. Context of Comilla

Comilla is a district situated in the east of Bangladesh. The urban population of Comilla is 7,07,597 and population density is 1712/ sq. km (BBS, 2014). The landscape of Comilla is defined by water bodies; rivers (Little Feni and Gomoti), natural lakes and man-made ponds of small and large size. While the water bodies served as water source for city neighborhoods in the past, with the introduction of piped water, the developed neighborhoods do not need to use them now. Many ponds are now a days being filled for developing structures. However, for the disadvantaged neighborhoods, the ponds still remain a source of water for household purposes- cleaning clothes, utensils, bathing etc. Locals from slum communities say that, the pond banks serve as gathering spaces for them, especially in summer when power-cuts are frequent and dense slum settlements are difficult to live in. The ponds serve as an important source of water also in case of fire-hazards, especially for neighborhoods which are not easily accessible to fire trucks.

Despite the city's role in shaping the history of the country (and of the region before the

formation of the Republic) over many centuries through its economic and cultural presence; the city has received little urban, infrastructural or technological upgrade in recent decades. Ill equipped to function as a modern city, it now struggles to cope with aggressive urban development. As with many cities in Bangladesh, whose infrastructural and resource capacities are collapsing under the weight of ever growing demands to deliver economic value and to take in rapidly increasing population, the city of Comilla is being regularly cut and stitched to enhance its economic and industrial production capacity and to accommodate the growing number of migrant inhabitants. These modifications on the cityscape have taken a heavy toll on the quality of life of individuals and entire neighborhoods: more so among those less privileged.

Figure 2: Skyline of Comilla

Figure 3: Moulobhipara Baburchibari community.

3.5. Project activities on the field

Shongraish and Moulobhipara were two of the first communities who participated in the project. Both communities have savings committees with UPPR and have developed their infrastructure (especially communal toilets and roads) over past years with UPPR

development projects. The communities were first briefed in detail about the project- its objectives and program. Then, based on discussions with the UPPR leaders, the architects fixed project boundaries for each community, i.e. parts of a community were chosen as defined by their geographical characteristics, or bounded by infrastructures. However, a possible extended area was also decided for future consideration.

With the help of ARCHITECTS' TEAMconsultants, the communities then prepared community maps to locate the respective positions of their houses, toilets, kitchens etc., type of houses (permanent/temporary) and ownership of lots. Through informal community workshop, inhabitants also discussed what improvements they desire in their living environment. These processes were performed in community courtyards or houses. While a part of the team were involved in mapping and collaborating directly with the communities, other parts of the team were involved in extracting and analysing maps from GIS databases, reviewing and appropriating building codes etc.

Along with these activities, land experts from SOCIAL SCIENTISTS' TEAM started to extract and analyze land status of other communities (Shubhopur Gangpar, Uttor Bhatpara etc.) on the list in order to facilitate future negotiations about land. However, in spite of numerous attempts from the SOCIAL SCIENTISTS' TEAM and ARCHITECTS' TEAM, negotiations with the Land Ministry could not be made because local government was not very helpful. It was difficult to make negotiations for land transfer from other ministries to housing ministry. The project applied to the Prime Minister to facilitate land negotiation processes, but didn't receive any response.

During community meetings, the consultant teams shared with the communities about successful community-led slum improvement projects in other South-east Asian countries (Burma, Fiji, Vietnam, India and Philippines). Through sharing about successful examples, architects' team attempted to create dialogue with the community about the importance of combined efforts of professionals and locals in creating cost-effective design solutions.

Figure 4: Community map of Moulobhipara (NHA, 2014)

Figure 5: Consulting design with house owner in Moulobhipara (NHA, 2014)

3.1. Financial mechanism

According to the financial scheme, one household will be granted a maximum amount of BDT 2,00,000 (USD 2548) as loan which they have to repay in 5 years with an interest rate of 15%. A household who takes a BDT 1,00,000 (USD 1274). loan would have to repay a total of BDT 1,42,740 (USD 2379). This fund will be disbursed from World Bank as loans, through Bangladesh Bank and then a local NGO and finally to a saving committee that the communities would form for this project.

In Shongraish, the first response to the numbers was that the interest rate is too high for them. In this project architects and social teams were the only group directly communicating with the community and naturally, because finance is not their core skill, neither of this group had very clear understanding of how the financial mechanism works. PKSF and the finance team from BRAC University only agreed to collaborate from Dhaka. With the absence of a financial team to explain, decode or modify the financial scheme properly, the consultant teams on the field attempted to broaden their skills on this issue with the help of visiting consultants, studying financial models from other projects etc.

Conflict arising on interest rate became a recurrent event during a particular phase in Comilla. Although the project derived its participatory design approaches from ACCA projects, a major difference between this project and any ACCA was the funding mechanism. In ACCA funded projects the fund reaches to a city-wide community network in the form of donation. Therefore, when it is disbursed within community household in the form of loan the interest rate is lower and also because the loan is repaid to their own community-network, the participants are less hesitant to repay the loan with an interest. Islam, one of the community architects says, "We were talking about examples like Baan Mankong, Bang Bua and CODI, we didn't probably yet realize the biggest difference between PPSIP and those examples were the funding mechanism. In Thailand the communities were receiving grants, and here the community was offered loan. That makes all the difference. We were too focused on the physical product, the housing." - (Islam, 2016).

Eventually no productive dialogue took place between the community and PPSIP and the consultant teams decided that before the financial scheme is revised to fit communities' affordability, it was of no use to design/plan further along with the community. However, the architects' teamcarried on with designing infrastructure, housing prototypes, cost estimation etc. so that they can further consult with the community when and if the conflict is resolved and the social scientists' team would continue with the social awareness program.

The consultant teams didn't have any clear idea about the financial mechanism even when the project moved to the next city Sirajgonj after working in Comilla for almost an year. According to Islam, the architects' team was aware that discussing financial mechanism in detail will only complicate the situation, so they only performed programs on housing and land. Design workshops, community mapping, interviews etc. In order to create dialogue with the families about their aspiration of housing improvement within a cost frame of BDT 200000 (USD 2550) per household.

3.7. Disputes among different stakeholders

One of the reasons why the community lost trust in the project, was because too many stakeholders were involved in this project and they visited the community at different times with different agenda. The values, working method and language of communication were different in all these different teams.

Conflict among consultant teams, community leaders and current UPPR officials proved to be strongest factor for certain disruptions along the project. The UPPR town manager, the official responsible for supervising UPPR efforts in communities, although verbally agreed to collaborate with PPSIP, was not fully convinced of the importance of PPSIP in "his" communities. He complained that he did not feel enough involved in the project. His dissension proved to be a deciding factor of UPPR leaders' non-cooperation with the project, just as the leaders' non-cooperation with the project closed the line of communication with the communities. When architects' teamattempted to bring ACCA fund for housing and infrastructure improvement in communities out of UPPR network, the disagreement from town manager leaders grew even stronger because this effort seemed to him as a token of contesting UPPR's capacity.

The different consultant teams in PPSIP could not fully utilize the potential of a multi-disciplinary professional environment. Only architects' team and social scientists' teams were mainly working in the field. Except periodical meetings and site visits, the other stake holders (representatives and professionals from NHA) were not involved in the field for long periods of time. This resulted in conflicted understanding of the context, goal and therefore compromising of the field professional's capacity.

According to Islam, the leading team on the field was the architects' team, and they were not fully equipped with the vast array of organisational skill that was required for a project like this. The limits of their skills were constantly challenged by cumbersome bureaucratic processes. The mind-set and working method of several groups were very different. The architects' team was mobilized by an ambitious humanistic result, the finance team was too pragmatic to find an alternative mechanism. An integrated approach of socio-technical innovation was missing (Islam, 2016).

4. Conclusion

The design of the project addresses grave issues as housing and infrastructure crisis in urban poor, intends to adopt a community-driven approach in integrated slum development. Yet, in the pilot phase coordination between communities and the project has failed in unfortunate ways. Two main reasons can be sketched out in order to understand why this happened.

a. Participatory design/planning was seen in an uncritical way: The notion of participatory design was accepted as if when the community participates in decision making processes, everything falls in place magically. Even if community always stays in the center of the discussion, the project actually failed to measure their financial capacity, eventually it was made sure that the Banks profit through this project. Not only participation from the community was ritualistic, serving only a face-value, the task force on the field was also put in a complete dead-end situation, they were always under pressure to meet World Bank's criteria. Even though consultant teams were free to take decisions on the field, practically they were merely executives offered with remuneration, devoid of power to make the really important decisions or challenge the institutional framework that they were part of.

b. The interest and enrolment of different stakeholders were not realistically sketched out: The design of the project had foreseen high risk around stakeholder participation and institutional consensus. This risk could not be averted. The unequal power dynamics could be changed if there were less number of stakeholders involved. With repetitive consensus building exercises, it was difficult to assign responsibility to any one actor for an action, the consultant teams on the field were completely perplexed in the process of considering every related stakeholders' interests before and after any activities they carried out on the field. Although World Bank, NHA, PKSF etc. had more power in taking decisions, their enrolment in the project was not sufficient. On the other hand, the task force on the field was responsible for continuously reporting to these stakeholders. Although they could well realize how these dynamics were affecting the project negatively, there weren't any stage available which allowed to flexibly negotiate these inequalities when the project already started; the power inequalities were too strong to mediate and the consultant teams could not deviate the fixed structure, although unlike the niche development projects, the architects did not have to search for funds etc. and had institutional support, they failed to create any real impact on the field.

It is agreeable that the project deals with urgent planning issues and started as a way forward to incorporate societal changes into the country's planning field, but it certainly will take alternative efforts to bring real change in the field in future.

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